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ECI 430/ Paul Harvey Project

Final Draft: 11/12/2012

Fearless Leader

Bailey was an American social reformer, an orator, a writer, and a statesman. He was also a strong-willed leader of the abolition movement during the Civil War era. There were many whites and Quakers that were against the institution of slavery during the time, and they advocated for blacks to have a voice in making change. Most of the whites who stood out against slavery were from the northern states like Bailey, who was from Maryland. He married Anna Murray in New York, and they moved together to Massachusetts where they had their first child, Lewis Henry. While living in New Bedford, Bailey heard William Lloyd Garrison speak for the first time at a meeting of the Bristol Anti-Slavery Society. At one of the meetings, Bailey was asked to speak and, afterwards, he was influenced to become an active member of the abolition movement. Garrison was a white, prominent abolitionist, journalist, and social reformer. Bailey subscribed to *The Liberator*, which was Garrison's anti-slavery newspaper. This marked the beginning of Bailey's impact on the abolition movement. He became a prominent speaker of the movement and joined the American Anti-Slavery Society. His first speech was delivered at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's annual convention in Nantucket. Bailey was admired for his eloquent oration and quickly subdued his nervousness as a public speaker.

There were many whites who believed in the inhumanity of slavery and fought for an end. The American Anti-Slavery Society decided that it was important to reach other people in the fight against slavery, so they embarked upon a six-month tour of meeting halls throughout the Eastern and Midwestern parts of the United States. Bailey continued to speak out against slavery

and racism as he traveled with the society, but he also decided to publish a book in order to reach more people. In 1845, his first book was published in Boston. The initial print ran for 5,000 copies and sold out in a short four months. The book received positive reviews and was praised for being such an eloquent piece of literature. Within three years of the publication, there were 11,000 copies in the United States; there were also copies in Europe because of the translation in French and Dutch. Bailey decided to travel to Ireland and Britain, where he spent two years giving lectures in churches and chapels. Bailey noted how differently the blacks were treated in England and said they were treated not as color, but as men. Bailey decided to return to the United States in hopes of abolishing slavery as had been done in Britain. He continued his writing by publishing newspapers that were funded by abolition supporters in England.

Not only did Bailey advocate for an end to slavery, but he was also a supporter of women's rights. In 1848, he was the only man to take a prominent part in the women's convention held at Seneca Falls, New York, where he and others advocated for women's rights. Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke on behalf of the women and asked the assembly to pass a resolution for women's suffrage. Bailey spoke in favor of women's suffrage when he stated, "In this denial of the right to participate in government, not merely the degradation of woman and the perpetuation of a great injustice happens, but the maintaining and repudiation of one-half of the moral and intellectual power of the government of the world" (Narrative, 1960, p. ____).

While working within the women's rights movement, Bailey met and became acquainted with the radical abolitionist John Brown. Brown was a white abolitionist known for his violent actions against slavery. Bailey entertained him as a house guest for three weeks and discussed helping slaves escape to the north. Brown planned to raise armed bands and attempted to start an armed slave rebellion in the South, but Bailey disapproved and did not want to be involved. In

1859, Brown led a raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, but it was unsuccessful and ended in his capture. Bailey wanted an end to slavery but knew that violent actions were not the way to address the injustice and that the raid would be unsuccessful. After Brown was tried and hanged, authorities found a letter from Bailey among his possessions. Bailey feared that he would be arrested as an accomplice to Brown's raid so he fled to Canada and then England. And now for the rest of the story.

After returning to America, Bailey became one of the most famous abolitionists leading into the years of the Civil War. Along with other abolitionists, he decided to publish his opinion that blacks should be allowed to fight for their freedom, and he helped campaign for Abraham Lincoln. On April 12, 1861, the Civil War began with the firing on Fort Sumter in the Charleston harbor. Bailey conferred with Lincoln about the unfair treatment of black soldiers that were fighting for the Union. He was dedicated to equality and fair treatment for all, and Lincoln made him a recruiter for the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. The Emancipation Proclamation took effect in 1863 and abolished slavery in the Confederate states. In 1864, the President met again with Bailey and recruited him to help organize slave escapees as volunteer recruits for the Union Army. Bailey wrote to the President and said, "All with whom I have thus far spoken on the subject, concur in the wisdom and benevolence of the idea, and some of them think it is practicable. That every slave who escapes from the Rebel States is a loss to the Rebellion and a gain to the Loyal Cause I need not stop to argue; the proposition is self evident. The negro is the stomach of the rebellion" (as cited in Blight, 1999). Bailey attended the White House reception following the second inauguration of President Lincoln. This relationship continued to develop as both men were determined to bring slavery to an end. Bailey continued to lead the 54th Massachusetts Infantry and, on April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrendered the

Confederate Army of Northern Virginia to Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant. Shortly after this Union victory, President Lincoln was assassinated on April 14. Although this was a tragic loss to the Union force and American people, Lincoln's leadership and support helped bring the Civil War to a close with a Union victory that changed American history.

Bailey viewed the Union victory as a rebirth of America and expected to see great changes in equality among all people. He continued to travel and lecture on racial issues and women's rights during the Reconstruction era. Bailey was not in full agreement with Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, because his policies did not favor black suffrage. Slavery had been outlawed with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, but blacks were still being treated unfairly. It was not until the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 that blacks were allowed to vote. Bailey's dedication and leadership led him to be the featured speaker at the celebrations of the ratification. Bailey was finally able to see some progress from the time he began as an abolitionist leader. He went on to become the president of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company in 1874, the United States Marshal for the District of Columbia in 1877, the Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia in 1881, the Minister-Resident and the Consul-General to the Republic of Haiti in 1891. After leading a life of great prominence and honor, Bailey delivered his final speech on January 9, 1894, denouncing lynchings. Shortly after, the great orator died of a heart attack on February 25, 1895.

Many would say that Bailey lived an accomplished and honorable life. But where did his life actually begin? The famous Bailey is better known as the great leader and former slave, Frederick Douglass. He was born a slave with the name Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey in Talbot County, Maryland. Frederick Douglas was born to a slave mother and her known-to-be-white master. Unlike many slaves, Douglass had the opportunity to educate himself while he

was enslaved. He not only learned how to read and write, but he also learned about the oppression that white people placed on the slaves by denying them education. When Douglass escaped slavery at the age of twenty, he changed his last name to Johnson in order to get married without his master's approval and to avoid being recaptured. After becoming involved in the abolition movement and becoming the great and eloquent orator he was, he decided to change his last name again. He insisted on keeping his first name and asked his friend and fellow abolitionist, Nathan Johnson, to help him choose a new one. Johnson, who had assisted Douglass in his move to Massachusetts after his escape, had recently read Sir Walter Scott's narrative poem, *The Lady of the Lake*. One of the poem's key figures was the leader of the Scottish clan Douglas. Frederick decided to add the extra s to make the name Douglass. This remained his name for the rest of his life and the name most people know him by. The great leader and speaker of the abolition movement, aid to Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, and holder of many other honored positions was none other than the former slave Frederick Douglass. He is an admirable figure and dedicated his entire life to the fight against slavery and equal rights for all. Through his speeches and lectures, Douglass provided a voice for all the slaves who could not be heard. His story is remarkable because he overcame slavery and became the prominent leader that he is known as today. Based on his oration techniques, qualified education, and honorable accomplishments, many would have trouble believing that this man was born a slave. Douglass displayed exemplary character in defeating his circumstances and lived a life that will never be forgotten. And now you know the rest of the story.

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